

each other pretty hard. But I have grown in admiration of the game given the following it has internationally and given the performance of our team, and I wish to congratulate Team USA. Despite losing today's game, they have achieved the honor of advancing into the round of 16 in the World Cup as we all watched and are excited about those prospects and are encouraged about the future of U.S. soccer and our prospects in the world cup.

So congratulations to them, to their families and to all fans of U.S. soccer all over the world and here in Washington cheering them on. If there is one thing that brought us together here this week, it is that, and we are grateful for it.

VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, there is a topic I would like to discuss before we leave for the Fourth of July recess and return to our States. One is an enormous story in my home State and, in particular, in my hometown of Miami, and that is the ongoing crisis in Venezuela. I have been talking about it for the better part of 3 months with regard to what is occurring there. It is pretty straightforward. There is an authoritarian government in Venezuela that has cracked down on the people in Venezuela, has crushed any sort of political dissent or tried to crush any form of political dissent. If a person is an outspoken critic of the Venezuelan government, they either wind up in jail or in exile.

In fact, the President of Venezuela, someone who won a fraudulent election just a year and a half ago, has now begun to turn on people in his own party when they dare to criticize him.

But the evidence is clear. First of all, the Venezuelan economy today is a disaster. The state of the Venezuela economy today is increasingly reminiscent of what is happening in Cuba: shortages of basic items, the inability to buy a bar of soap or toilet paper or toothpaste. The shortages are extraordinary.

We are talking about one of the richest countries in the hemisphere—a nation blessed with a talented and educated population and with natural resources, and particularly oil—and this guy in charge of that country has ruined Venezuela and its economy. That in and of itself is worthy of condemnation.

But what is even more apparent is how he has cracked down on political dissent in Venezuela. We have documented how over 40 people have now lost their lives in protests on Venezuela—by the way, protests that began when a student was sexually assaulted at a university. They protested the lack of security, and the security forces of Venezuela responded—not by going after the assailants but by going after the student protesters. Since then, opposition leaders have been jailed, Members of the opposition in

the Parliament have been removed from their seats, and Venezuela continues to spiral out of control.

There have been gross human rights violations in Venezuela at the direction of the Venezuelan Government by organisms of the Venezuelan Government and extragovernmental organizations as well.

So in light of what is happening in Venezuela, and in light of the fact that so many people who live in Florida are impacted deeply by what is happening in Venezuela—because they are originally from there, because they have family there or because they conduct business there or because they care about what happens in our hemisphere—because of all of these things, not only have I been talking about this issue on the Senate floor but we began to take action.

The first thing we did was we passed a resolution from this Senate—and I thank my colleagues; it passed unanimously—condemning these human rights violations. I know sometimes we sit around here and wonder: What is the point of these resolutions?

They matter. I cannot tell you how many people are aware of what we have done here in the Senate, just speaking out and condemning these violations and making it very clear whose side we are on. We are on the side of the democratic aspirations and the rights of the people of Venezuela.

The second thing we did is we worked through the process here because unlike the way Maduro runs his government in Venezuela, here we have a republic and this Senate is an important part of that republic. We filed a bill to sanction individuals—not the government, not the country—individuals in the Venezuelan Government responsible for these human rights violations. In fact, in the committee I named 25 of them. That piece of legislation—that law—sanctioning the leaders in Venezuela passed the committee almost unanimously with bipartisan support.

Let me take a moment to thank Senator MENENDEZ, the chairman of that committee, for his leadership on this issue and my colleague from Florida BILL NELSON for his leadership on this issue, even though he is not on the committee. When we held a hearing on the issue of Venezuela, he went to the hearing and he attended an event we did in Miami with the Venezuelan community to talk about this reality.

That bill passed out of our committee. In addition to passing out of this committee, a very similar bill passed out of the House under the leadership of Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN. Both the Senate and the House—and they passed it off the floor of the House.

So the Venezuelan sanctions bill is ready for action here on the floor of the Senate. Knowing that it was a non-controversial issue, that there is almost unanimous support for it, I have attempted to pass this bill by something we call unanimous consent,

which basically means that the cloakrooms call the respective offices and they ask all of the Members: We are going to try to pass this bill. Do you have an objection? The reason why we do it that way is so we can save time so we have the time available to debate these other issues that are before us—especially on an issue that is not controversial. We pass a lot of law around here that way.

Unfortunately, there have been some objections—one from each side. I am happy to report that one of those two objections has been removed. It came from the Democratic side. The majority removed their objection. So it appears this bill is ready to move forward, but for the objection of one colleague of ours, who has the right to object, and who, quite frankly, has objections to it that he believes strongly about and we are respectful of.

What I am asking for at this point is—given that objection—when we come back from the recess, I am hoping that one way or another we will get a chance to vote. This is an issue that virtually every Member of the Senate but for one or two—at this point it appears one—is supportive of. I hope we can pass it because it is important. It will matter. This is not sanctions, for example, like the ones we have seen in the past on other countries. These are extremely targeted. These are targeted against individuals in the Venezuelan Government who have directed or carried out gross human rights violations.

They will be impactful because many of these people in the Venezuelan Government who are conducting these human rights violations actually spend their weekends in the United States. They fly on the private jets they bought with stolen money to the United States to stay in their fancy condominiums or their mansions. They shop at our stores. They parade up our streets. And then Monday morning they go back to work full time violating human rights.

So these sanctions will matter. These human rights violators in Venezuela have investments in the United States. In fact, when they steal money from Venezuela, often times they use straw companies and straw purchasers to invest that money in our economy—predominantly in Florida, but also in other places.

There is no reason in the world why they should not be sanctioned for what they have done. There is no reason in the world why we should not be going after these individuals for what they have done.

One of the cornerstones of our foreign policy must always be the protection of human rights anywhere in the world where they are challenged or oppressed. This gives us an opportunity to speak in a clear voice in a part of the world that, quite frankly, both parties have been guilty of neglecting. I have spent plenty of time around here talking about what is going on in Syria and what is going on in Iraq, and that

is a very dangerous issue that is occurring there. The counterterrorism risks that are posed by ISIL in Iraq and Syria are dramatic and deserve a lot of attention. We have spent time on the floor talking about what has happened in Ukraine and Russia's illegal actions with regard to Crimea, and they deserve attention. We have spent some time even talking about the Chinese ambitions in the Asian-Pacific region and their illegitimate territorial claims.

The only thing I am saying is that what happens in the Western Hemisphere matters too—that human rights violations in Venezuela are just as important as human rights violations in Africa or Europe or Asia or any other part of the world. Sometimes I feel as if they do not get the attention they deserve around here.

This is our opportunity to show that this hemisphere is important and that what happens in our hemisphere matters. I want you to know that the people of Venezuela—particularly those students and those who desire a democratic and respectful future—they are watching. Every single time we do something on Venezuela here, we hear it in phone calls, on Twitter, on Facebook, in visits to our office and in emails and in letters. They are watching, they are listening, and they are aware.

What I want people in the world to know and people in the hemisphere to know is that America does not simply care about stability; we also care about democracy and freedom and about human rights. This is our opportunity to put action where our words are.

So I sincerely hope that when we return here in about 8 or 9 days we can find a way forward to get a vote on this. If we are unable to do this through the unanimous consent process, which they call a hotline, my intentions are to come to this floor and offer it as what they call a live unanimous consent, where I will stand here and do what the Senator from Texas just did—or tried to do—with regard to the IRS issue.

I intend to come to this floor and propose this bill and ask for unanimous consent. If someone objects, then we will have a debate about that objection. Should that fail, then I hope we can have a vote scheduled. I promise it will not take any more than 15 minutes—or 10 if you want to limit the vote to 10 minutes. But let's get this done.

This is important. We have worked this the appropriate way. Often times, people come to the floor in the Senate and they pull a bill out of their pocket and say: Let's file it for messaging purposes. This is real. This is impactful. The House has already passed a version of this. Doesn't this issue at least deserve 10 minutes of the Senate's time?

So we are going to try to get this done one more time through unanimous approval. And we are going to work over the next 10 days to hopefully

get everyone's support. But if we cannot do it that way, I hope we can schedule a vote on the Senate floor on this bill so we can go after and sanction those criminals in Venezuela who are stealing the money of the Venezuelan people and using the strength and the power of that government to attack their own people. I hope that will be a priority for us when we return. It deserves that attention.

I appreciate the opportunity to address this issue today, and I wish for all my colleagues the next 10 days will be fruitful in your return to your home States, and I look forward to working with you on these issues when we return.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Massachusetts.

MASSACHUSETTS BUFFER ZONE

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, since 1973, when the Supreme Court decided that a woman's right to choose was constitutionally protected, women's health clinics across the country have been targeted by violence and other criminal activities by extremists.

The crimes are alarming: harassment, arson, acid attacks, obstruction, violent threats, and even murder. Women's safety has been repeatedly put at risk simply for exercising a constitutional right.

In the past 10 years, there have been approximately 75,000 incidents of violence against abortion providers in the United States. That is unacceptable. We should always remember that each of these victims of violence has a name, a family, and a story.

In 1994, a gunman killed two people and wounded five others at two clinics in Massachusetts. One of these victims was 25-year-old Shannon Lowney, a daughter of public schoolteachers, a beloved sister, and a volunteer who worked domestically and internationally with poor families and children.

Shannon worked as a receptionist and Spanish translator at Planned Parenthood in Brookline, MA. She worked there not for the pay but because she fundamentally believed women had a right to affordable health care. She wanted to do her part to ensure that patients at a vulnerable and stressful time in life were greeted with a smile. Five days after Christmas in 1994 she was fatally shot in the neck at a Planned Parenthood clinic by an extremist protester.

Shannon's story is just one of the many tragedies caused by violence against women exercising their rights.

In 2007, after the laws on the books proved inadequate, Massachusetts ensured that there would be fair and balanced laws that created a buffer zone of 35 feet around the entry of reproductive health care facilities.

This law was intended to protect people such as Shannon and the thousands of women and staff who visit and work at clinics.

The buffer zone law worked. Massachusetts women could exercise their fundamental right to health care without running a gauntlet of abuse. According to a survey of reproductive health care centers across the country, a majority of facilities with buffer zones experienced a decrease in criminal activity after the buffer zone was instituted.

Today the Supreme Court of the United States took away those buffer zones of safety when it struck down the Massachusetts buffer zone law, effectively undoing the historic progress we have made in ensuring that women are protected when accessing reproductive health care and exercising their constitutional rights.

Today's Supreme Court ruling puts women at risk simply for exercising their constitutional rights. Shannon's brother Liam visited me on the day that this case was argued before the Supreme Court. Their family is representative of what has happened across this country in terms of the endangerment of women when they seek to exercise their constitutional rights.

So today is a sad day. It is not just a sad day for America but in particular for Shannon's family because they put a lot on the line to ensure that this case was brought before the Supreme Court of the United States.

The Court's decision makes it more difficult for States to guarantee women's reproductive rights and more likely that acts of violence and intimidation against women seeking reproductive health care will occur.

With reproductive rights under attack across the country like never before, it is imperative that we ensure the basic safety of all women and staff at Planned Parenthood and other health facilities.

We should be expanding access to safe reproductive health care for women, not restricting it. That is unfortunately what today is going to represent in the history of health care for women in our country.

The Presiding Officer is a national leader on these issues, fighting for the rights of women. I stand with her and with the other Members of the Senate but, more importantly, also with ordinary families across this country and Planned Parenthood and all the women in Massachusetts and this country who believe every woman seeking reproductive health care should be safe and protected.

I am proud that all Massachusetts law enforcement officials will continue to use every legal tool available to ensure the safety and privacy of women and clinic staff. Today is a historic day. Unfortunately, it is one of which our country should not be proud.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.